

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) A method for facilitating an electronic purchase using a funds transfer system, the method comprising steps of:

receiving, at a funds transfer system, purchase information from a vendor system, the purchase information including a purchase price;

receiving, at a funds transfer system, selection of a private payment option from a purchaser, the private payment option comprising indication of a choice for private transfer of financial information from the purchaser to the funds transfer system exclusive of the vendor system;

establishing a secure connection between the funds transfer system and the purchaser, the secure connection preventing access by the vendor system during the transfer of the financial information over the secure connection;

receiving, at a funds transfer system via the secure connection, purchaser information from a the purchaser, the purchaser information including an identification of a purchaser account;

transmitting, via the secure connection, a validation request to the purchaser;

receiving, via the secure connection, validation information from the purchaser in response to the validation request;

validating the purchaser information by checking the validation information against a database at the funds transfer system, wherein:

if the purchaser information is validated, electronically sending a digital IOU to the vendor system, and

the digital "I owe you" (IOU) is comprised of the purchase price;
and
redeeming the digital IOU.

15. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the step of redeeming the digital IOU further comprises steps of:
receiving the digital IOU from the vendor system;
confirming the digital IOU;
receiving funds from the purchaser account equal to the digital IOU into a funds transfer account; and
transferring the funds to the vendor system from the funds transfer account.

16. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein if the purchaser **information** is not validated, sending a message to the purchaser that the electronic purchase is denied.

17. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein if the purchaser **information** is not validated, further comprising a step for adding the purchaser to a purchaser database.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 wherein the step for confirming the digital IOU comprises comparing a digital signature on the digital IOU to a signature log at a funds transfer system.

19-23. (Canceled)

24. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) A method for transferring funds from a payor to a payee as part of a checkout process at a point-of-sale device, the method comprising steps of:

receiving payment information **with at** a funds transfer system, the payment information including payee identification, ~~payor identification~~ and payment amount;

receiving, at the funds transfer system, selection of a private payment option from a payor at the point-of-sale device, the private payment option comprising indication of a choice for private transfer of financial information from the payor to the funds transfer system;

establishing a secure connection between the funds transfer system and the point-of-sale device, the secure connection preventing access by the payee during transfer of the financial information over the secure connection;

receiving, at the funds transfer system via the secure connection, payor identification from the payor;

validating the payor identification and availability of the payment information at amount with the funds transfer system;

notifying the payor that the payment-information transfer is not valid if the validating step is unsuccessful; and

transferring funds from a payor account to a payee account through the funds transfer system if the payment-information payor identification and the availability of the payment amount is validated.

25. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring funds from the payor to the payee as part of the checkout process as recited in claim 24, the method further comprising a step of notifying the payee of the funds transfer.

26. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method for transferring funds from the payor to the payee as part of the checkout process as recited in claim 24, wherein the step for validating the payment-information comprises a step of checking the payor identification and the payee identification against a user database at the funds transfer system.

27. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring funds from the payor to the payee as part of the checkout process as recited in claim 26, wherein the user database includes account information for the payor and the payee.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) An electronic transaction method for transferring funds from a user account to a vendor account to compensate the vendor for a purchase selected by a user while accessing a vendor system online and after the user selects from the vendor system a payment option associated with a funds transfer system, the method comprising steps of:

receiving, at the funds transfer system, selection of a private payment option from user, the private payment option comprising indication of a choice for private transfer of financial information from the user to the funds transfer system;

establishing a **secure** connection from the funds transfer system to the user during checkout of the user with the vendor system, wherein the funds transfer system is separate from the vendor system **and wherein the secure connection is configured to prevent access by the vendor during transfer of the financial information over the secure connection;**

receiving purchase data from the vendor system with the funds transfer system;

requesting validation from the user for the purchase;

receiving **with , at the funds transfer system via the secure connection,**

validation information from the user;

checking the validation information at the funds transfer system against a database; **and**

transferring funds from the user account to the funds transfer system if the step of checking the validation information is successful; and

transferring funds from the funds transfer system to the vendor account.

30. (Withdrawn) The electronic transaction method for transferring funds from the user account to the vendor account to compensate the vendor for the purchase selected by the user while accessing the vendor system online and after the user selects from the vendor system the payment option associated with the funds transfer system as recited in claim 29,

further comprising a step of returning a message to the user denying the purchase if the step of checking the validation information is unsuccessful.

31. (Withdrawn) The electronic transaction method for transferring funds from the user account to the vendor account to compensate the vendor for the purchase selected by the user while accessing the vendor system online and after the user selects from the vendor system the payment option associated with the funds transfer system as recited in claim 29, further comprising a step of modifying account information in the database associated with the user if the step of checking the validation information is unsuccessful.

32. (Withdrawn) The electronic transaction method for transferring funds from the user account to the vendor account to compensate the vendor for the purchase selected by the user while accessing the vendor system online and after the user selects from the vendor system the payment option associated with the funds transfer system as recited in claim 29, wherein at least one of the user account and the vendor account is a bank account.

33. (Withdrawn) The electronic transaction method for transferring funds from the user account to the vendor account to compensate the vendor for the purchase selected by the user while accessing the vendor system online and after the user selects from the vendor system the payment option associated with the funds transfer system as recited in claim 29, wherein the user account is a credit card account.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) A method for authorizing an electronic purchase during checkout with a user and a vendor system, the method comprising the steps of:
receiving purchase information from the vendor system, wherein the purchase information comprises a purchase price;

receiving, at a funds transfer system, selection of a private payment option from a purchaser, the private payment option comprising indication of a choice for private transfer of financial information from the purchaser to the funds transfer system;

establishing a secure connection between the funds transfer system and the purchaser, the secure connection preventing access by the vendor system during transfer of the financial information over the secure connection;

requesting ~~payment user~~ information from the user;

receiving ~~payment~~, at the funds transfer system via the secure connection,
user information from the user ~~with funds transfer system identifying a user account;~~

transmitting a validation request to the user;

receiving, at the funds transfer system via the secure connection, validation information from the user comprising a password for the user account and verification of the purchase price;

validating the ~~payment~~ received validation information with the funds transfer system;

crediting a vendor account in a first amount that corresponds to the purchase price if the step of validating ~~payment information~~ is successful; and

debiting ~~[[a]] the~~ user account a second amount that corresponds to the purchase price if the step of validating ~~payment information~~ is successful.

36. (Withdrawn) The method for authorizing the electronic purchase during checkout with the user and the vendor system as recited in claim 35, wherein the vendor account and/or the user account are bank accounts.

37. (Withdrawn) The method for authorizing the electronic purchase during checkout with the user and the vendor system as recited in claim 35, wherein the vendor account and/or the user account are credit card account.

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the computer-implementable method for authorizing the electronic purchase during checkout with the user and the vendor system, the computer-readable medium comprising code for:

receiving purchase information from the vendor system, wherein the purchase information comprises a purchase price;

receiving, at the funds transfer system, selection of a private payment option from user, the private payment option comprising indication of a choice for private transfer of financial information from the user to the funds transfer system;

establishing a secure connection from the funds transfer system to the user, wherein the secure connection is configured to prevent access by the vendor system during transfer of the financial information over the secure connection;

requesting **payment user account** information from the user;

receiving **payment user account** information from the user with funds transfer system **via the secure connection**;

validating the **payment user account** information with the funds transfer system;

crediting a vendor account in a first amount that corresponds to the purchase price if the step of validating payment information is successful; and

debiting **[[a]] the** user account a second amount that corresponds to the purchase price if the step of validating payment information is successful.

39-43. (Canceled)

44. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring funds from the payor to the payee as part of the checkout process as recited in claim 24, wherein the transferring step comprises steps of:

transferring funds from the payor account to a funds transfer system account; and
transferring funds from the funds transfer system account to a payee account.

45. (Withdrawn) The method for transferring funds from the payor to the payee as part of the checkout process as recited in claim 24, wherein the funds are in at least one of the following forms: a gift certificate, a store credit, airline mileage credit, promotional points, foreign funds, and another currency.

46. (Withdrawn) The electronic transaction method for transferring funds from the user account to the vendor account to compensate the vendor for the purchase selected by the user while accessing the vendor system online and after the user selects from the vendor system the payment option associated with the funds transfer system as recited in claim 29, wherein the requesting step comprises steps of:

causing a pop-up window to be opened on a user machine; and
presenting the validation request in the pop-up window.